

Are you looking for the right career path?

We've produced a short guide to help you identify the right career route for you

When you first start to look for your first "proper" job, you'll frequently be told how important it is to find a job you're good at, that you'll enjoy. But generally, no-one tells you how to do this.

There isn't a secret instruction manual – but we've hopefully pulled together some useful tips to help you on this journey to find the best career pathway for you.

1 Where To Start?

The standard advice tends to be "think about it". This could take weeks and weeks; or even months and months, with no guarantee of success or great discovery of the perfect job for you for life.

The best way to find out about career options and possible jobs is to investigate and research. Have fair expectations of yourself though, don't expect to know everything about every job in the entire world. That simply isn't possible. Particularly with ongoing development and innovation creating brand new jobs and career pathways almost daily. Instead, give yourself a fair chance – allow yourself the time to investigate businesses that might interest you, to talk to people who do jobs you might like, to break the surface of what might be and see what you could be a part of.

If you are still in further education, it's likely that you have access to a careers advisor, if you do – use them. If this isn't something you have access to; look at the contacts you already have – who knows who. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

2 Get Social

Don't under-estimate the power of social media. Build yourself a LinkedIn profile and start to follow businesses and causes that interest you. By doing this, you'll begin to see who works where and what they do.

Don't be afraid to reach out to people whose careers look like something you'd love to do; most people will be flattered that you got in touch - and who doesn't love talking about themselves! Worst that can happen is you don't get a response; who cares – move on. Your plan should stay flexible as you learn more and start to build a picture of the kinds of environments and business you'd want to work for and jobs you might enjoy undertaking

3 Reflecting

Think about what makes you tick from a personality perspective, ask people who know you well for their input too. Identify what you are curious about, what skills you enjoy developing and using, and what motivates you. It also helps if you think about why. This way you can also be clear on what you don't enjoy so that you don't end up doing work which doesn't suit you.

4 Exploring

Investigate different options and research different employers and industries; think about what is attracting you to these sectors and read up on individuals who work there – learning what kind of roles in which sectors really interest you; and what doesn't.



5 Planning

Separate the different options, routes and pathways you have identified

Put these in order of preference so that you can decide what steps you need to take to move forward effectively and make the strongest applications

6 Read Up

Reading up on the businesses you've identified as interesting; or where seem to have the jobs you prefer the look of best, will help you get a feel of what they're like to work for. The websites and career pages will help you understand the complexity of an organisation and the kinds of long term career you could have. Do they have Facebook or Instagram pages – many businesses do now, so take advantage of this.

7 The Aim Of The Game

Ultimately, investigating and researching to define a career pathway should help you to understand yourself and allow you to explore different opportunities.

By reviewing options, and beginning to make choices as to what really excites you - you'll be able to create a strong and flexible plan of action for making relevant job applications. Not every application will be successful, but hopefully you'll generate more opportunities for yourself and gain more experience along the way.

